

#3

STATUS

N E W S L E T T E R

VOLUME 4 · ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER · 1985



RANDOM FILES
BBS-LAW
"HACKER" The Game

Assin Lang
Atari writer
Formerly

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=====

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Editor's File

I don't know about you, but for some reason November seems to herald the end of the year. Not December, not New Year's Eve, but November. This month is like that split second when a wave is about to break: the water piles up, poised to crash down on the beach and in the next second it's over...the wave just a memory.

November's like that.

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, next weekend's Christmas...and before you can blink an eye, the year is gone. Enough philosophy, on with the show...

It seems that we are on the verge of a British Invasion in 520ST software...our English counterparts have embraced the ATARI machine with about as much fervor as they've shunned the IBM PC (price seems to be the main motivator), and their software houses have responded in kind! Hundreds of titles have been announced or released since THE machine has made its appearance, and it seems as if the publishers of ANTIC magazine are going to be on the vanguard of importers of this British flood. Owners (or future owners) of these amazing machines would do well to keep their eyes out for these products from across the water...

But back to the land of mere mortals.

This month's Newsletter takes another look at that venerable old word processor...ATARIWRITER, thanks to Ron Johnson for insights. Also in this issue: a review of the new ACTIVISION game HACKER by Buck Maddrey, an eye-opening report on the state of telecomputing law by Doug Boynton, words of wisdom from the mysterious Mr. Computer and (as always) the STATUS minutes.

Finally, a plug for one of this club's latest state-of-the-art undertakings: SILICON VALLEY NIGHTS an ONLINE serial (sort of) on the STATUS BBS! Thrill to the adventures of Wilson Moss (Sunnyvale private detective) and while your at it, take a hand in deciding Moss' fate and solving the murder mystery at the same time...

STATUS: more than just a pretty face.

ER III

Telecomputing

By Doug Boynton

There are fears that, in the near future, either the state or federal government may move to place restrictions or regulations on the operations of Computer Bulletin Board Systems. You may have seen one of a series of text files titled "BBSLAWxx" posted either on the STATUS BBS, or other systems around the country.

It is very likely these fears are well-founded.

A check through most any newspaper in recent days finds headlines like, "HACKERS BREAK INTO CREDIT COMPUTER", "DEVIATES CATALOG CHILDREN BY COMPUTER", "COMPUTER KIDS MAKE LONG DISTANCE CALLS FOR FREE", and on and on.

It is foolish to believe that your state or federal lawmaker is computer-literate. It's been my experience (as a reporter) that these men and women are very knowledgeable about many things, but they are not exactly on the "cutting edge" of technology. They read the newspapers, and their constituent mail a lot. Please refer to the above paragraph to see what they've been reading.

So, it's clear that sooner or later, the world of telecommunications will fall under some form of legislation. The question is, what form will this legislation take?

First, System Operators will very likely become legally responsible for the information and messages posted. They're easy to pinpoint through the telephone number of the Bulletin Board. It will be important for them to keep accurate records of persons with access to the BBS, and dates and times of calls placed to the BBS. This is the present state of the law, anyway. Recent cases have arisen where the SYSOP was held responsible for messages left by others.

Now, once the SYSOP can pinpoint who may have left an "offending" message (definition, anyone?), chances are the SYSOP can pass the blame to the user.

From here, it gets fuzzy. What is an "offending" message? What is obscenity? What is an "Adult BBS"? You get the point. We're stuck with the same old legal questions we've dealt with for years. Is a computer photo of a nude person "obscene"? Are there "satanic messages" in any of the files we up-and-download? How about those programs that help hackers locate other computers on the phone system...are they legal?

I have a few suggestions.

Years ago, the broadcasting industry, fearing federal censorship, set its own standards for regulating itself. Not every radio and television station joined this group, of course, but by representing the vast majority of broadcasters, the National Association of Broadcasters gained a fair share of political clout. In the process, it went a long way toward educating lawmakers about what their business was all about. Maybe it's time for a "Code of Ethics" for us...and an organization to back it up.

Computer people, by and large, are quiet people. No one ever hears about us...or from us. Write a letter or two to your lawmakers. Find out what they're reading or hearing from others. Educate them about what we're doing. Chances are, their idea of a person interested in computers is quite different than what we really are...a cross-section of folks not unlike any other.

Finally, those of us who telecommunicate need to become more responsible. The dropping price of modems has meant a lot of enjoyment for many more people. It also means that any kook with forty bucks has the ability to darken our good names. There are good reasons some people would want to regulate what we do.

NEXT TIME: RESULTS OF ON-LINE SURVEY!



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Assembly Language

By Chris Crawford

LECTURE THREE LOGIC

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BOOLEAN LOGIC

A great deal of programming involves the use of boolean logic. This is a standardized system for handling logical manipulations. It's sort of like algebra for logic. You must understand Boolean logic if you are to write assembly language programs, so let's get started.

Where algebra deals with numbers, Boolean logic deals with propositions. A proposition is just a statement such as "Fred eats worms." It can take only two possible values -- True or False. In our program we seldom bother with broad and glorious propositions such as "Love is the universal language of truth" or "War is the extension of policy by other means." Instead, we normally deal with propositions such as "The joystick trigger has been pressed," or "There is a diskette in the drive."

When we use Boolean logic with a computer, we may think in terms of true and false, but the computer is actually working with 1's and 0's. We use the following convention: a 1 corresponds to a Boolean value of "true", while a 0 corresponds to a Boolean "false".

Using this system we can represent propositions inside the computer. However, programming requires more than mere representation of data; we must also be able to manipulate that data. This brings us to the Boolean operators. There are four common Boolean operations necessary for most programming practices:

NOT This is the simplest of Boolean operators. It takes a single Boolean value as an input and produces as its output the logical converse of the input. Thus, a true input yields output, while a false input generates a true input.

OR This Boolean operator takes two Boolean values as its input and generates a single Boolean value as its output. The value of the output depends on the values of the inputs according to the following rule: If one input is true OR the other value is true, then the output is true. Otherwise, the output is false.

AND: This Boolean operator is just like the OR - operator, except that it uses a different rule. Its rule is: If one input is true AND the other input is true, then the output is true; otherwise, the output is false.

EXCLUSIVE-OR This Boolean operator is just like the OR - operator, except that its rule is: If one input is true, OR the other input is true, But not both are true, then the output is true; otherwise, the output is false.

When we use the 6502 for Boolean operations, you must remember that the operations are eight bits wide. Instead of working with one bit at a time, we use all eight bits of a word in parallel. The bits in a byte are independent and do not affect each other in any way -- at least as far as Boolean operations are concerned.

LDA	FISH
AND	GOAT

This will first load the accumulator with the value FISH. It will then And the contents of the accumulator with the contents of GOAT. The result of the and-operation will be left in the accumulator. The AND-instruction can use an immediate operand if you desire, just as the ADC-instruction can. The EOR-instruction provides the exclusive-or operator. It works just like the AND-instruction. The ORA instruction provides the or-operator in just the same way.

If you wish to obtain the NOT-operation, just use EOR #\$FF; this will invert each bit in the accumulator. Because NOT is so easily reproduced with EOR, there is no special NOT instruction in the 6502.

APPLICATIONS OF BOOLEAN LOGIC

If you have any sense at all, you are probably asking, "What good is all this Boolean nonsense? What would I use it for?" Four applications are available:

Program Logic Many times our program encounters rather complex logical situations. The program must be able to load a file; If the FMS is in place and there is a diskette in the disk drive, and the diskette has the file we are looking for, or the file specification calls for a cassette load, then we will load the program. Many programming problems involve such Boolean operations; keeping them straight is certainly a headache.

Masking Bits Sometimes we need to isolate particular bits in a byte. For example, in Eastern Front (1941) I used the character value to store the unit type. The color of the unit was encoded in the upper two bits of the byte, the type in the lower six bits. If I wanted to get only the unit type, I had to mask out the upper two bits. This I did with the following code fragment:

```
LDA    UNITCODE
AND    #$3F
```

The AND-instruction eliminated the upper two bits, leaving me with just the unit type. Bit-masking like this is useful in many situations. We use it frequently when we pack bits into a byte to save memory. It also handy with input handling. If you want to read the joystick port, you frequently mask out the bits in turn to see which is active.

By the way, you mask out bits set to 1 with the AND-instruction. You mask out bits set to 0 with the ORA instruction. The logic is reversed.

Setting and Clearing Individual Bits We also use the AND and ORA instructions to set or clear individual bits within a byte. This is most often useful for handling arrays of flag bits.

Folding Bytes Together This little fragment of code will fold bytes together:

```
LDA    FISH
EOR    GOAT
AND    MASK
EOR    GOAT
STA    ANSWER
```

This is a magical piece of code. See if you can figure out what it does. Experiment with two values of MASK: \$0F and \$F0.

SHIFT AND ROTATE INSTRUCTIONS

The 6502 also has instructions that allow you to shift instructions inside a byte. The first of these are the shift instructions. One, ASL, shifts a byte to the left; the other, LSR shifts a byte to the right. Thus, the by 201101011, when shifted left, becomes 211010110. Each bit is shifted one position to the left. The leftmost bit is rudely pushed right out of the byte and falls away ("Aaaarrggg!"). A zero is shifted into the rightmost bit. The LSR instruction does the same thing in the opposite direction.

Note that ASL also doubles the value of the byte, while LSR halves it. Two ASL's multiply by four; three multiply by eight. This makes it easy to do simple multiplication, but be careful with round-off error here. What happens if you try to multiply by 256? What do you get if you halve 3?

A variation on the shift instructions are the rotate instructions. There are two: rotate left (ROL) and rotate right (ROR). These function just like the shift instructions, except that the bit that gets shoved into the bottom is not necessarily a zero; it is the contents of the Carry bit. The bit that gets pushed off the edge of the byte goes into the Carry bit, so it is not lost. Thus, if you rotate either way nine times, you'll be right back where you started.

Rotate instructions are a handy way to get a particular bit into the carry bit where you can work on it. Conversely, once you get your desired bit into the carry bit the way you want it, you can put it back into a byte with some rotate instructions.

INCREMENT AND DECREMENT INSTRUCTIONS

The last instructions I will cover are the increment and decrement instructions. These allow you to add one (increment) or subtract one (decrement) from a memory location. These are not considered to be arithmetic operations so they do not affect the Carry flag, nor are they affected by it. You cannot increment or decrement the accumulator, only RAM locations.

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Random Files

By Mr. Computer

In order to install any cartridge in an ATARI 800 computer, you must first place two fingers in an indentation just above the keyboard and "PULL OPEN". This releases the door latch and the door flies open to reveal two cartridge slots, left and right. After several hundred openings and closings the door may begin to stick as if the spring that hurls it open is weak. You may even have to open it the rest of the way by hand.

The problem is not a weak spring, but excess friction of the plastic and metal hinge mechanism. A very small amount of vaseline on the end of a Q-Tip applied to the points of contact will cure this problem...It worked for me!



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AtariWriter Form Letters And Labels Revisited

By Ron Johnson

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This is Part ONE of Ron's two part series on AtariWriter, part TWO: Mailing Labels, will appear next issue.]

THE INTRODUCTION

The form letter and mailing label features of AtariWriter are two of the least explained but most useful functions of the program. Several articles have described (or tried to describe!) how to use them. I will review two of them that have been in print within the past year or so, noting problems and/or advantages. Then, I will describe in detail the form letter and mail label systems I prefer. I have developed and placed practice files on disk designed for Epson and compatible printers. The disk may be borrowed/copied at club meetings or by mail through the STATUS Librarian at the usual rates. Files will be referenced as they are needed.

Both Cassie Stahl's article in ANTIC for March, 1985, and Frank Pazel's article in JACG of Oct., 1984, (reprinted in STATUS Newsletter of Dec., 1984), use the same technique for making form letters. The [OPTION] [INSERT] key combination marks the location for text to be entered automatically later from another file. Here, I will use a three line address, a salutation (Dear _____), and two personal names in the body of the letter to give each form letter a personal touch. This file is saved to disk as FORMLTR.002.

A file is then created that contains the three line address, the salutation, and two personal names for each one on the mailing list. The number of data lines in the data file must be the same as the number of [OPTION] [INSERTs] in the form letter. First, delete the entire format line at the top of the file (unfortunately Cassie Stahl forgot to mention this, so her method doesn't work). Second, type in each of the three address lines with [RETURNS] after each line. Third, type in the salutation with a [RETURN]. Lastly, type in the two names, [RETURNS] after each. Start the next complete address on the next line, leave no blank lines.

Save this file as MERGE.002, or something similar, and reload the main form letter. Select the print option and 'Y' at the print whole document query. Now select the number of copies you wish (number of complete addresses in file MERGE.002) at the prompt. The next entry says MAKE ENTRY, HIT RETURN. Type [CTRL] V; and, in caps, D1:MERGE.002 followed by a [RETURN]. The disk drive and printer will spring into life and spew forth the form letters. Go ahead and try it.

addresses. A big advantage, however, is that with no format line, the data file can be used with any form letter that has the same number of [OPTION] [INSERTs] as data lines as mentioned above.

THE 'PREFURRED' METHOD

Gary Furr, in the documentation for his "AtariWriter Printer Drivers" disk program (APX-20223), describes the method I prefer to use for form letters. The data file contains the same format line as the form letter and adds a blank line (return only) between each address set. The form letter contains one extra [OPTION] [INSERT] placed at the very top of the form letter, directly under the format line. All other procedures described above remain the same!

The extra [OPTION] [INSERT] is used initially by the [CTRL] V and D1:MERGE.001. The second form letter puts the blank line into this place. Remember, this method requires that the data file and form letter file have the same format line (try them different!); and provides a separator (blank line) between addresses.

THE FORM LETTER

Using the style of Gary Furr, the form letter for practice is:

B12 D4 G3 I5 J0 L10 R70 S2 T12 Y132
[OPTION] [INSERT]

14 October, 1985
From the ATARI of the RON
Dept. of Oceanography
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia 23508

[OPTION] [INSERT]
[OPTION] [INSERT]
[OPTION] [INSERT]

Dear [OPTION] [INSERT],

Hey, it's really nice to know that you are willing, [OPTION] [INSERT], to loan me the money to buy the ATARI 520ST!

I'll certainly take good care of it. Oh, the loan repayment schedule of one dollar per month is quite satisfactory.

Thanks again, [OPTION] [INSERT], keep hacking!

Sincerely,
Ronald E. Johnson

The [OPTION] [INSERT] count is seven. This means that each address will have six lines of text and one blank separator line. The form letter on disk is FORMLTR.001.

THE DATA FILE

A sample data file, on disk as MERGE.001, is:

B12 D4 E3 I5 J0 L10 P70 S2 T12 Y132

Ronald E. Johnson [RETURN]

4715 Newport Ave. [RETURN]

Norfolk, Virginia 23508 [RETURN]

Ron [RETURN]

Ronnie [RETURN]

Ernie [RETURN]

[RETURN]

Gene Rodriguez [RETURN]

123 Any Street [RETURN]

Virginia Beach, VA 23456 [RETURN]

Gene [RETURN]

Big Gene [RETURN]

President [RETURN]

[RETURN]

Stan Harrison [RETURN]

321 More Ave. [RETURN]

Upper Ipswich, NY 01234 [RETURN]

Stan [RETURN]

Big Nip [RETURN]

Vice Pres. [RETURN]

[RETURN]

Please note that only my address is valid! Now, if you have a copy of the practice disk (or made one) and AtariWriter, you are ready to make form letters!

ADDENDUM

The review of "Paper Clip" by Henry Colonna in the September, 1985, issue of the STATUS Newsletter pointed out the progress word processors have made in recent years. However, Henry lumped all Epson printers together in the category of no reverse line feed, hence, no double column printing. The FX-80 and newer series do indeed support reverse line feed and double column printing! The MX and RX do not, I don't know about the L series.

Software Review

"Hacker"

Designed by Steve Cartwright

Produced by Brad Fregger

Marketed by the folks at "Activision"

Reviewed by: Buck Maddrey

The space above was left blank intentionally...I had considered not putting anything at all in this review. The blank section kinda goes along with the nonexistent instructions. That's right! A game that has no instructions, directions, hints or goals! With the exception of the loading procedure, this game comes with NO OTHER DOCUMENTATION.

"Hacker" is a handle that has been associated with computer users, especially the ones who thrive on breaking protection schemes or breaking into mainframes illegally. In this game you the "HACKER" have accidentally stumbled into the mainframe of Magma Ltd. and are asked to "LOGON PLEASE?". Failure to input the correct logon in the required amount of time will cause your connection to be terminated... Control "H" (help) reveals to you that the password has been changed to the name of the place where the testing is being done, (Which is no real help at all)...time runs out and termination begins, but a failure in the security system allows you to logon anyway. You are then required to point out the location of certain devices on a robot, such as the "infrared sensor", etc. Once the right sequence is achieved you are shown a map of the world.

There are numerous points on the map that are flashing and you are able to travel from one point to the other with your joystick. You are trying to recover an important document and once you recover all the parts, the document will lead you further into the mystery.

Designer Steve Cartwright has certainly come up with a unique new approach in this game. Excellent graphics and sound, humor and mystery make this a game that will make you want to "Keep on Hacking"!

Oh, by the way, Activision offers, for those who can't stand it, a "Hacker Hints" for a nominal fee.

Rating 4+ out of 5.

SYNFILE+: 64K Version

By Jack Holtzhauer

Current Notes 9/85

I know many of us who own 130XE's are impatiently waiting for SYNAPSE to release new versions of SYNFILE+ and SYNCAL which make use of the 130XE's bank-switching capabilities. But did those of you who own 800XL know SYNFILE+ is now available in a version which makes use of the extra 16K RAM afforded by this unit?

A couple of weeks ago I had the occasion to trouble-shoot an associate's SYNFILE+ data disk that had died because the .IDX file had become scrambled. When the same problem arose several days later, I determined that the program disk was at fault, called SYNAPSE and arranged for a replacement.

When the new disk arrived it bore a label indicating it was a "64K version". When my friend booted the program on her 800XL she found that a data file previously having a max capacity of 547 records could now hold 877. Not only that, but the new program disk came with a new utility disk providing "fast copy" and DATA-PERFECT/SYNFILE+ conversion routines.

Another call to SYNAPSE elicited the information that current versions of SYNFILE+ do, indeed, utilize the extra 16K provided by the 800XL and that owners of the original version can get up-date by forwarding their original disk to SYNAPSE with a check for \$7.50 -- no charge for programs under warranty. If interested, contact SYNAPSE at 5221 Central Avenue, Richmond, CA 94804 (415-479-1120).

STATUS Minutes

FIRST MEETING--October 3, 1985

President Gene Rodriguez opened the meeting by welcoming the members and visitors. Status officers were then recognized.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Gene Rodriguez reported the latest info from Atari and other hardware and software companies.

†

PICNIC COMMITTEE REPORT: Dave Howell reported on the final details for the Oct. 6 picnic.

†

NON-PROFIT COMMITTEE REPORT: Ron Johnson reported the application package was recieved an a lawyer would be contacted.

†

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Dick Litchfield reported Thank You Letters were sent to Software City, Unidyne, and Tidewater Amatuer Radio Conventions for providing equipment and facilities for our booth at the Hamfest.

†

TREASURER'S REPORT: J.C. Petty reported the latest status of the treasury and presented the latest club acquisitions.

†

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT: Dave Howell reported on the latest additions to the software library.

†

ACTIVITIES REPORT: Buck Maddrey reported on the club participation at the Hamfest.

†

OLD BUSINESS: Buck Maddrey reported on the cost of having business cards printed for the club. A motion by Nip Harrison to purchase 500 business cards was seconded by Doug Boynton and passed.

†

NEW BUSINESS: Buck Maddrey motioned that the club initiate an award for authors of exceptional public domain software. He then suggested the first award be to presented to Trent Dudley for Amodem 7.1. The motion was seconded by Gene Rodriguez III and then approved.

The meeting was then adjourned.

SECOND MEETING--17 October 1985

President Gene Rodriguez opened the meeting by welcoming all members and visitors.

↓
DEMONSTRATIONS: Les Logan of Logan-Bower Mini-Floppy Services presented a demonstration on floppy disk drives.

↓
J.C. Petty presented his 850 Interface that was made from a kit.

↓
The meeting was then adjourned.

Dick Litchfield##
Secretary, STATUS

Random Files

By Mr. Computer

Cross stitch on the ATARI?

I have always found a certain amount enjoyment in doodling, drawing, drafting and art. I usually have a perfect mental picture of the end result that I want, but when it comes to actually getting it on paper, something happens to that "perfect" picture.

The ATARI'S graphics are its best calling card. And with light pens, touch tablets, and exotic software, you can draw anything! Well, almost anything...if you can draw, but you really don't have to be able to draw.

The local arts and crafts stores are loaded with books of CROSS STITCH designs. These designs are laid out on numbered block graph paper. These blocks can very easily be transferred to x-y coordinates on the ATARI screen and to specific pixels. The books also tell what color each block is to be. Programming a picture is now a breeze. Perhaps one of these books will help you design that alternate character set you've wanted to do, or, that perfect Print Shop Icon you've been thinking about.

President's Column

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to a faulty Disk Drive, El Presidente was unable to get this month's communiqué out from his mountain headquarters... he was, however, able to stay on the shortwave long enough to get these important messages out before the evil government death squads were able to home in on his position.]

Happy Thanksgiving to all you Atarians out there... enjoy the bird (I know I will!) but try not to get too full!

PRODUCTS OF NOTE:

RAMWERX 1040--- Produced by the folks at SOFTWERX, this Ram expansion kit doubles the existing memory in the 520ST. SOFTWERX reports that the procedure is safe, well documented and easy to do. The RAMWERX kit comes complete and ready to install for \$199.00 (plus \$2.50 S/H) for more info, or to order contact:

SOFTWERX
PO BOX 71118
MURRAY, UT 84107

ATARIWRITER PRINTER DRIVERS--- If you've had trouble finding a driver for that ToKyD 1095/s you thought was such a bargain, or even a driver for one of the more main-stream printers, you've come to the right place! Gary Furr acknowledged AtariWriter guru, has printer drivers for just about every printer known to man... from ATARI 1027 to Epson FX and all the others in between (see the Prez for a full list) and the price is right too! Just \$10.00 gets yours on a disk, and you'll be on your way to word processing heaven [and Newsletter glory, EDITOR] for more info contact:

Gary W. Furr
PO BOX 1330
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94042-1330

(Cashier's check or Money Order, please)

RUMORS FROM THE CAPITAL:

A hard drive with greater than 10 megabytes from ATARI Corp. has been whispered about lately, as has a "1040ST" complete with 1 meg Ram and AT&T Unix compatibility... still in the lab: the 32-bit machine (codename- TT series) and a host of peripherals. Supra's hard disk for the 8-bit ATARIS is 2.0s/2.5 compatible and will be on the market within days...

That's all for now, they're closing in fast.

S.T.A.T.U.S.

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily express or reflect the opinions of the Southside Tidewater Atari Technical Users Society. Some of the material contained herein may have been taken from bulletin boards and newsletters of other groups and should not necessarily be construed as fact.

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MEETINGS: S.T.A.T.U.S. meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month at the Baylake Pines Private School, 2204 Treasure Island Dr., in Virginia Beach. at 6:30 p.m. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:

Submitted articles are preferred on disk text files, but will be greatfully accepted on hard copy (including handwriting) if you do not have a disc drive. If you have a modem, you can upload your articles to the Editor by calling 499-6021. Articles may be submitted anytime, but will probably not make that month's newsletter if submitted less than one week before the regular meeting date.

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